

## SNAPSHOT Instigating Dialogue on Transitional Justice

An international team of experts prepares to build the bridge between multiple actors involved in the transitional justice process.



*International group PILPG hosted a strategy meeting in Azzawiya, and other cities, on transitional justice mechanisms and the Libyan context.*

USAID/Libya

*"We want this collaboration to continue. Thanks to PILPG, we are open to the world."*

*-- Participant who had been in prison for 15 years, Zawiya Transitional Justice Workshop*

**October 2012** – After decades of divide and rule tactics by the Qadhafi regime, intense fighting among communities during the revolution, and a series of human rights abuses and retaliations, the Libyan government is now focused on stabilizing basic governance and security. Simultaneously, civil society is working to create a holistic transitional justice strategy.

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) provided a grant to the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG) to support building relationships and common understanding among concerned actors in pursuit of an inclusive transitional justice process in Libya.

In its first in-country mission, PILPG hosted several discourses between government officials, local leaders, and relevant players in civil society in order to create an efficient and inclusive transitional justice strategy. Hosting workshops in Azzawiya, Zuwara, and Tripoli, activists from each city came prepared to learn and discuss transitional justice and to address some of Libya's largest, unresolved grievances. Although transitional justice is widely seen as a necessary component of working toward reconciliation and a successful political transition, limited understanding of the process threatens effective implementation.

"This is the first time we actually heard the definition of transitional justice," said one participant in the Zuwara Transitional Justice Workshop.

The workshop was structured to allow participants from different, sometimes conflicting communities to jointly brainstorm solutions to specific grievances. The majority of the participants were women who highlighted women's issues, and ways in which women-led civil society groups can support the transitional justice process. In the Azzawiya workshop, female participants astounded fellow participants by assuring them that allegations of sexual crimes committed by the Qadhafi regime during the revolution were in fact brought forward, and that victims would be willing to disclose information and be treated.

As a follow-up to PILPG workshops, OTI is supporting local participants to implement activities to further inform and shape the transitional justice process. For example, one participant from the battle-stricken town of Misrata has received a grant to train members of a civil society network in transitional justice principles and then provide them with materials to hold workshops in seven additional communities around Libya. The recipient communities were determined to be most in need of transitional justice to resolve outstanding grievances and inter-communal conflict.

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